

Fair Fields News

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On the Farm

It has felt like summer for a while and yet we are only now transitioning into our summer vegetables. Peas are winding up (especially with the heat and lack of rain) and we have worked through most of our spring brassicas. The green onions, which exploded in size with the heat this year, are almost too large to pick. And the lettuce is finally slowing down, yeah!!!

Crops that are getting going are, cucumbers, zucchini, beets, carrots, beans and very soon our nightshades. We are happy to be giving parsley and basil and will soon give some whole basil plants for you to pick away at from home.

Also coming is our first honey harvest. In fact, it is happening this week! The bees are looking very healthy this year and we are hoping for a large harvest. This should mean that we will have honey available for sale at the CSA pickups at some point this season. We will be sure to let you know when it becomes available.

In August, we hope our perennial herbs will be in full force again.

There was very intense weed pressure coming in from the lawn. As perennial weeds move into the root system of a perennial crop they become impossible to extricate. With this happening in our herb beds we decided to dig everything out, lay landscape fabric around the perimeter and sift the soil back into place. This will hopefully remove most of the weeds and prevent them from re-entering easily in the future. It is good work to be doing, but like most things is also taking much longer than anticipated. We apologize for not having more herbs sooner.

We are ecstatic that Nicole has finished her schooling and passed her provincial exams to qualify as a Registered Massage Therapist! We just

received word this Tuesday and quickly followed with jumping and yelling around the herb bed. After a champagne toast, we were back to work renovating the perennial herb beds (FYI champagne and heavy digging in 30 degree weather is not a good combo...).

Nicole is waiting for registry at which point she will be practicing in Neustadt at a massage therapy clinic. She may also take clients at other locations in Walkerton or Hanover depending on how it all goes.

The only drawback with her moving to professional practice is that I imagine I will be receive less massages as time goes on... Humph!

Harvesting

- **Beets**
- **Broccoli**
- **Cabbage**
- **Carrots**
- **Cauliflower**
- **Cucumber**
- **Fennel**
- **Green Onions**
- **Herbs**
- **Kale and Chard**
- **Lettuce**
- **Peas**
- **Zucchini**



Irrigating Through the Drought

Most of the crops are still doing well, some of them are even thriving, as the drought intensifies. This is only possible with the help of our irrigation system.

Our system starts with the irrigation pond. Dug last November, the pond is an irregular triangle, roughly 100 ft. by 60 ft. and narrowing to about 5 ft. at the end. At its deepest it is about 9 ft and it becomes shallow at the narrow end. Looking at the pond this spring, it seemed like an immense amount of water, however, with the drought this spring and summer it has

dropped over 2 ft. This likely represents just under a 1/3 of the water in there. If this weather persists, we will have to pump water from our wide shallow pond into our irrigation pond.

While we feel lucky to have two ponds to rely on, but hope it doesn't come to that. The second pond is a great habitat for wetland plants, frogs, geese, ducks, turtles and a host of other creatures. It is a tough trade-off to think of damaging a naturalizing ecosystem on the farm just to irrigate a relatively small fruit and vegeta-

ble operation. These types of trade-offs will likely become more frequent as climate change progresses and we deal with more and more extreme weather.

At the irrigation pond we have a gas powered pump that feeds a 2 inch delivery line. In the previous two years we have barely used our irrigation. Only this year are we starting to appreciate just how much gas this pump uses. We have probably used between 100-150 litres of gas so far this year and if weather trends continue we

could easily double that by the end of the season. This definitely adds to the carbon footprint of our fruits and vegetables...

The rest of our system consists of one 150 ft. line of sprinklers, which we use for short lived and water loving crops like brassicas, peas and lettuce, and drip irrigation for long term and disease prone crops, like tomatoes and melons. Here too there is a trade off, as the sprinklers create less plastic waste and are easier to manage, but use far more water than the drip system.

Still Looking for Members...

We are still looking for members for the 2016 season. We have had about 1 new member per week, joining since the beginning of the pickups. If we can keep that up we may get close to our goal for this year by the end of the season.

For new members starting partway through the season, we offer prorated shares roughly proportional to the number of weeks left of pickups. Shares are weighted a little heavier towards the end of the season as the overall value of pro-

duce rises throughout the summer peaking in late August or early September.

There is space in both the Guelph and on-farm pickups, so if you think of anyone who may be interested, please pass our infor-

mation their way.

Also, we will be expanding into the Kitchener/Waterloo market next year, so if you know people in the tri-city area, please pass word that we will be doing a CSA drop off there starting next June.

Fair Fields CSA Potluck

This years CSA Potluck will be **Saturday July 30**, from **2-7 pm**.

We will be throwing some food on the **BBQ** during that time and enjoying it with some **salads** and **homemade beer**.

We are welcoming members, friends and family and encourage you to bring yours as well and enjoy a **tour of the farm** and some food and beverages with us. There will also be **bocce ball** and **croquet** set up.

Please **RSVP** if you think you will come so we can get a sense of numbers.

Hope to see you there!

Devan, Nicole, Lilly and Rachael